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THE OUT-OF-CLASSROOM AUDIENCE OF WGBH--A STUDY OF MOTIVATION IN VIEWING.

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THIS REPORT REVIEWED THE RESEARCH CONDUCTED, 1960-61, IN METROPOLITAN BOSTON ON THE AUDIENCE OF AN EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION STATION. THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY WAS A TWO-WAVE SURVEY--THE FIRST WAVE BY 9,140 TELEPHONE CALLS IN EARLY 1960, AND THE SECOND WAVE 1 YEAR LATER BY PERSONAL INTERVIEWS WITH SOME OF THE SAME PEOPLE. THE INTEREST IN THE PERSONAL INTERVIEWING SESSIONS WAS FOCUSED PRIMARILY ON THE ETV VIEWERS. OF 511 INTERVIEWS, 222 WERE WITH ETV VIEWERS, 83 WITH "MARGINAL CASES," AND 137 WITH A REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE OF NONVIEWERS. BY EVALUATING AND CONBINING THESE THREE SAMPLES, IT WAS POSSIBLE TO OBTAIN A CROSS SECTION OF BOSTON METROPOLITAN AREA ADULTS. THE 20 PERCENT OF THOSE WHO WATCH ETV IN BOSTON WERE DESCRIBED AS PERSONS OF A SPECIAL KIND--ALERT, ASPIRING, AND INTELLIGENT. DESPITE A NUMBER OF CONSIDERATIONS, THE POTENTIAL FOR INCREASING THE AUDIENCE OF THE BOSTON ETV STATION WAS SMALL SINCE THERE WERE FEW PROSPECTIVE RECRUITS AMONG NONVIEWERS. IT WAS RECOMMENDED THAT ATTEMPTS BE MADE TO INCREASE THE THREE-QUARTER HOUR PER WEEK VIEWING TIME OF THE POPULATION WHO WATCH ETV. (JC)

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

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Introduction

The following report reviews research done in 1960-61 in Metropolitan Boston on the audience of the educational television station WGBH. All of the material in this report has been or will be published. Some of it appeared in The Journal of Social Issues.[1] Other portions are exerpted from a book, The People Look at Educational Television, by Wilbur Schramm, Jack Lyle and Ithiel de Sola Pool, which will be published by the Stanford University Press in 1963. That volume contains reports upon the audiences of nine representative ETV stations in the United States. When we in Boston compared our results with those which Schramm and his colleagues were getting in other areas, there were so many similarities that it seemed sensible to publish the results together in a single source. We therefore consolidated our material on Boston with Schramm's material on the other stations. Readers with a general interest in educational television are referred to that volume.

We want to take this opportunity to thank the many people who assisted us on this study. WGBH gave us unstinting co-operation. Robert Larsen of the station worked closely with us throughout. Alfred Kelman and Alan Mayers directed much of the fieldwork and coding for the survey. Whitney Thompson, George Papadopoulo, and Robert Jones assisted in the construction of the interview schedule and in other ways. Bernard Berelson and Garry Steiner helped us in making our survey of ETV and their survey of commercial television comparable on a number of measurements. The Computation Center of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology generously made machine time available for the analysis of the results. Miss Elly Terlingen handled all the preparation of manuscripts with expedition and patience.

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[1] Ithiel de Sola Pool and Barbara Adler, "Educational Television: Is Anybody Watching?", Journal of Social Issues, Vol. XVIII, No. 2, 1962, pp. 50-60.

Chapter I

The Study

Boston is a city with a long heritage of culture. The Boston Symphony and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts are known around the world. And for its form of culture the Boston Pops is as widely known. Harvard and M.I.T. help in making the name Cambridge symbolic of education. The cognoscente would add such other names as the Boston Latin, the Atheneum and the Gardner.

Boston is also an industrial city with large ethnic minorities. Even Cambridge, its academic suburb, is above all an industrial city whose slum population far outnumbers its academicians. It is a city whose public schools and public libraries dismay the intellectuals and where there are always votes to be won by berating the universities.

In this complex environment since 1955 there has been located one of the stronger of this country's ETV stations, WGBH. It is a cultural rather than instructional station. For the first five years of its existence, it was almost purely a cultural station, broadcasting generally from 5 to 10 p.m. In 1960, however, it began school broadcasts in the mornings, and has become the originating station for such nationally circulated instructional programs as "Parlons Français." It broadcasts the Boston Symphony regularly, along with an impressive group of urbane and cultured programs, such as commentaries on the news by Louis Lyons, head of the Nieman Foundation at Harvard. WGBH operates with the advice and co-operation of the Lowell Institute Co-operative Broadcasting Council, members of which include the Lowell Institute, Harvard, M.I.T., five other colleges and universities, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Its financial support comes from the Lowell Institute, other foundations, and the community, and only in small part from the member educational institutions. It has attracted deep loyalties. When the studio building burned down, in 1961,

school children went from door to door soliciting money to rebuild, and newspaper, commercial television stations, and many individuals got back of the campaign to get WGBH a new building. The station has a transmitter on high ground west of Boston, well-equipped studios, a mobile unit, and a microwave network that connects it to all the New England ETV stations and to the new educational station in New York.

The audience for that station is what we set out to estimate and study. The design of the Boston study was a two wave survey--the first wave by telephone, the second wave in person. From November 10 through December 17, 1959, and January 10 through February 24, 1960, 9,140 telephone interviews were completed between the hours of 5:00 and 10:00 on weekday evenings, and between 11:30 and 6:30 on Sundays, the hours during which WGBH-TV broadcasts. We asked what if anything was on the TV set at the moment and also asked retrospective questions about what programs the respondent remembered viewing, especially on WGBH-TV. This interview lasted about 14 minutes. Then a year later, from September, 1960, through February, 1961, some of the same people were approached for personal interviews lasting somewhat over an hour each. In these 511 interviews in TV homes we asked about the full range of the respondent's leisure-time activities: his participation in sports, games, politics, courses, church affairs, and clubs; his use of radio, magazines and books, as well as TV. Our interview was presented to respondents as a study of leisure, and while the more subtle among them may well have guessed that TV was our major interest, that was not obvious. The personal interview was not identified with the phone interview a year earlier. We were most interested in ETV viewers, so 222 of our 511 interviews were devoted to them although they are only one-fifth of the population. Eightly-three other interviews were with those fuzzy cases which might be called marginal cases. One-hundred-thirty-seven interviews were with a representative sample of non-viewers. By weighing and then combining these three samples totaling 442 cases it was possible to get a picture of a cross section of Boston metropolitan area adults.

The Matched Sample

There was one Further feature to the design of the study, namely interviews with matched samples of viewers and non-viewers. Comparisons of ETV viewers and non-viewers are tricky. Let us illustrate the problem with an example. Thirty-one percent of WGBH viewers have completed college while only 9 percent of the non-viewers have gone that far with their education.[2] We find that 40 percent of non-viewers of ETV admit that they sometimes watch TV because they started on one show and "get stuck for the rest of the evening," while only 30 per cent of ETV viewers admit that this happens to them. Is that a difference in TV habits characterizing ETV viewers as such or is it just a difference between better educated people and less educated people?

To answer such questions the M.I.T. study undertook certain matching procedures to compare the viewers of ETV not just with non-viewers, but with non-viewers of the same social and educational character. What about two men of identical age, education, size of family and suburban or urban residence one of whom watches WGBH and one of whom does not. Would they differ in susceptability to lead-in, or would they be the same?

To answer that question and questions like it, it was necessary to interview non-viewers who in social characteristics matched the viewers. Such people do not fall into a sample naturally in any large number. For example, the non-viewers produced by a small probability sample will not include many people of high educational level. So from the large pool of telephone respondents, each member of a representative sample of WGBH viewers was matched with a non-viewer

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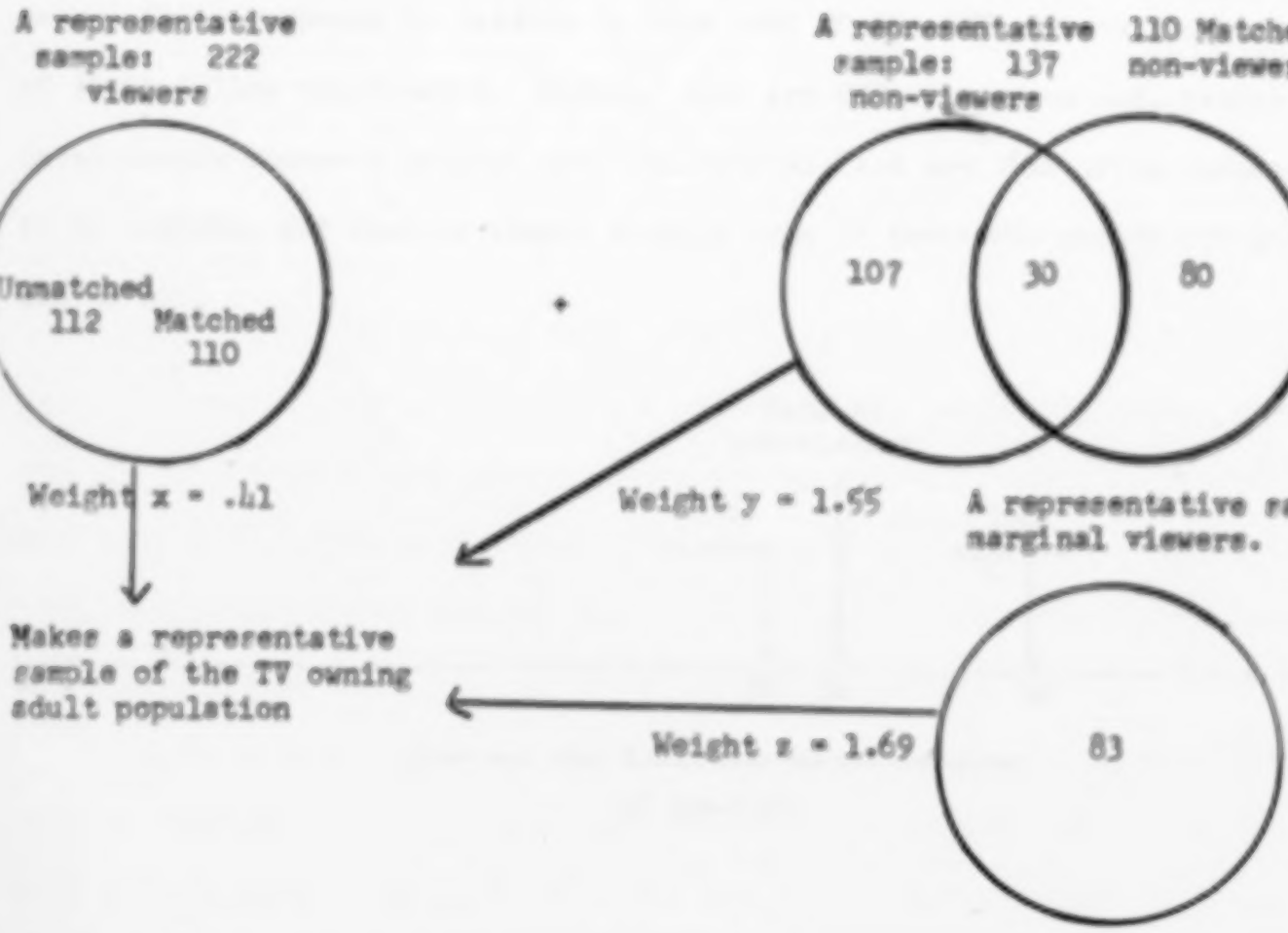
[2] The gremlins that bias even a carefully drawn probability sample are illustrated by the fact that in our face-to-face interviews with non-viewers, refusals and moved persons took away more persons of low education. Thus our telephone sample of non-viewers contains thirteen percent persons with only grade school education, but these were only eight percent of the face-to-face non-viewer respondents. Persons with some college education were but fourteen percent of non-viewers originally, but were twenty percent of those who had face-to-face interviews. This is important, for it tends to reduce the differences between interview results with non-viewers and viewers below what they really are. Some of our findings in this study may therefore be overly conservative.

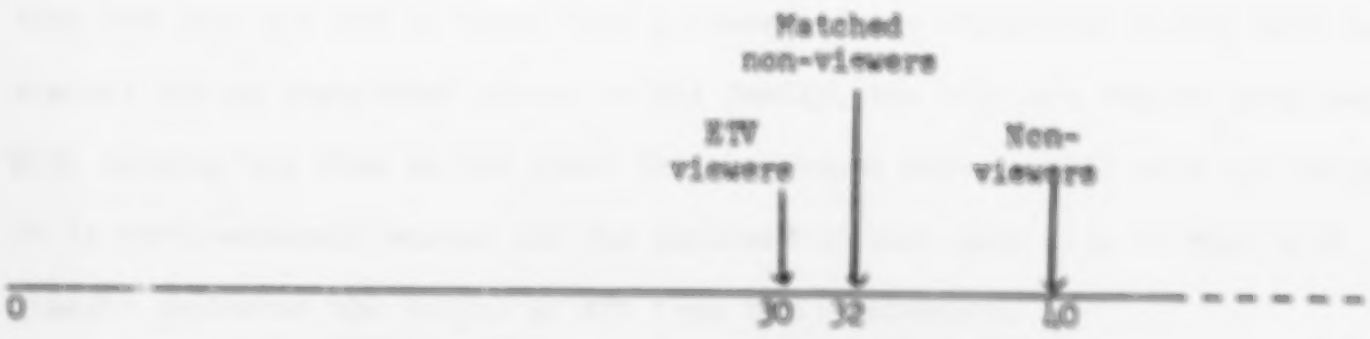
who was like him in major social respects.[3] These individuals were then also interviewed in person. Some of the results reported in the following pages thus consist of a comparison of 110 ETV viewers and 110 individually matched non-viewers.[4] Other results compare 222 representative viewers with 137 representative non-viewers.



[3]Non-viewers were matched with viewers with respect to sex, age, size of household, urban or suburban residence, education and family income. However, even in so large a population as that sampled in the telephone interviews, every non-viewer could not be mateched with a viewer like him in all these social characteristics. In some cases, and in a few instances more of the criteria were dropped in the following order: family income, size of family, education.

[4]Normally we compare the 110 matched non-viewers with all 222 viewers (not just the matched ones) to take advantage of the greater stability of the larger number. The 110 matched viewers were tabulated only to check that they did not differ from the larger population of which they are one half.

The usefulness of this design is illustrated by the question about lead-in which we posed before. ETV viewers were less likely to be captured by lead-in than were the non-viewers. But, we asked, is that a characteristic of ETV viewers as such or does it simply reflect their higher educational status? The matched non-viewers, who also are well educated on the average, provide the answer. Their response to lead-in is like that of the ETV viewers, not like that of their fellow non-viewers. Whether they are ETV viewers or not, better educated people choose a program more deliberately and are less often seduced into it by lead-in, and that is almost equally true of those who choose ETV and those who do not.



Percent who Sometimes Watch Because
of Lead-in

Chapter II

Who Watches WGBH?

The people who watch WGBH are a distinctive group.

A. Those from a Supportive Milieu

The people who watch WGBH are high status people who mix with other high status people of similar tastes. They are people with $1,000 higher median income than the non-viewers, and with higher education.

The speciality of the viewers becomes more dramatically high-lighted if we look at the figures the other way around. What are the chances that persons of different sorts will become WGBH viewers? We can see in the following table that the odds are one in three that a member of a professional family will be a viewer: for an unemployed person or his family, the odds are one in seventeen. With nothing but time on his hands the unemployed person still does not watch. It is socio-economic status and the personality that goes with it that most clearly separates the public of ETV from their neighbors.

Indeed, a person with a postgraduate education and a family income of $7,000 - $10,000 a year is more likely to be a viewer than not. A person with only a grade school education and less than $5,000 in income has only one in eleven chances of being a viewer. But people of the latter type are four times as numerous as the former, so these poor and uneducated ones add 2 percent of WGBH's total audience, while the well-off, highly educated add only 2½ percent--not a great difference for the broadcaster who must recognize that both kinds of people are out there watching.

A station manager may be interested in thinking about the percentages with the total audience as the base. He wants to know the composition of his clientele and in Boston while 42 percent are from professional and managerial families, it is still true that nearly one-fifth (19 percent) are blue collar people. But what

the table below tells us is that these few blue collar people are recruited from a large base only a few of whom choose ETV, while the professional families who form but 16 percent of the population provide one fourth of the WGBH audience.

The Viewers of WGBH

Viewers as percent of each population stratum

Education		Occupation of Head of Household	
Grade School	10%	Professional	32%
High School	15	Managerial	26
Vocational School	24	Clerical	18
College	32	Sales	21
Post-Graduate	37	Farm	17
		Craftsman	17
Family Income		Operatives	12
		Service Workers	13
Under $5,000	16	Laborers	9
$5,000- $7,000	21	Student	18
$7,000-$10,000	30	Retired	22
Over $10,000	34	Unemployed	6
		Housewife	15
Urbanization		(This table should be read: 10 percent of possible viewers with grade school education are actually viewers, etc.)	
Highly urbanized	17		
Suburban	22		

People do talk a lot about TV. Twenty-five percent of WGBH viewers and non-viewers alike reported that within the past twenty-four hours they had talked to someone outside their own household about something they had seen on TV. And 80 percent (for viewers and non-viewers alike) of conversations about TV were described as conversations about a show both parties had seen. This seems an extraordinary proportion; let us discount it a bit for possible response bias; but no matter how much we discount it, a pattern seems clear. People do talk about TV and they talk about shared TV experiences. If initially one friend in a pair "discovers" a show, before long both share the habit or both drop it. And when

the habit is shared, talking about TV is then usually not a matter of imparting fresh information. It is a way of sharing effect and of confirming one's own experiences. It is analogous to the pattern observed in various studies that people who have seen a sporting event are the ones most likely to read newspaper accounts of it, and that people who have just bought a product are the ones most likely to read the ads for it.

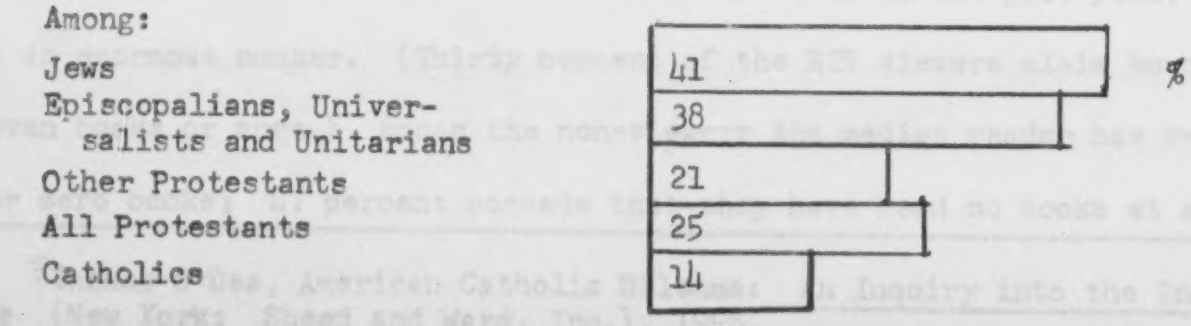
So the man who is the one out of eleven in his milieu who watches WGBH is doing a harder thing than the man half of whose friends do the same. The density of viewers in a population stratum is a critical fact in assessing the prospects for audience growth within it. It is harder to stimulate additional watching where word of mouth support does not exist than in those circles where a good ETV show will be discussed among friends.

B. Those from Achieving Milieus

The difference in social status between ETV viewers and non-viewers has been often noted in earlier studies. But there are related social differences between them that have usually been missed. Most notable among them is religion.

Boston is a predominantly Catholic city. Fifty-seven percent of our cross section sample were Catholics. Boston also has a substantial Jewish population--about 10 percent. These two groups provide the extreme patterns of ETV use or non-use. The Catholic population is so large in Boston that two-fifths (39%) of the ETV viewers are Catholic even though only one Catholic in seven watches. The small Jewish population watches so heavily that it provides another one-fifth of the WGBH audience.

PROPORTION AMONG DIFFERENT DENOMINATIONS WHO ARE WGBH VIEWERS



The results match many other findings on religion and education. Catholics are few among scientists or doctoral candidates.[5] Jews are typically high. And among Protestants certain denominations, represented in our coding by Episcopalians, Universalists, and Unitarians provide larger proportions of professional and intellectual leadership.

The pattern of religious differences which we note for use of ETV, is one that social scientists since Max Weber and R. H. Tawney have recognized as reflecting an ethic of achievement. David McClelland has documented by careful tests and measurements such differences in need to achieve among these religious groups.

In our data almost any measure of aspiration level, work orientation, or social striving separates ETV users from non-users. WGBH viewers, for example, belong to more organizations, but they particularly exceed in attending meetings of professional, civic, political and PTA organizations. Thirty percent of viewers list membership in such purposeful groups as against only 11 percent of non-viewers.

In sports for example WGBH viewers are more likely to both play and watch sports of higher social prestige: tennis, skiing, sailing, and golf. Twenty-four percent play and 17 percent watch these as against 15 and 8 percent for non-viewers.

C. The Fans of High Culture

Of all the differences between ETV viewers and non-viewers, none stand out more prominently than interest in culture and interest in information.

Whatever the criterion, ETV viewers are more cultured people, as the figures from Boston testify. (See table on page 11).

Most dramatic of all the differences is the difference in reading. The median ETV viewer in Boston claims to have read four books in the past year, concededly not an enormous number. (Thirty percent of the ETV viewers claim to have read eleven books or more.) Among the non-viewers the median reader has read just over zero books; 47 percent concede that they have read no books at all.

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[5] Thomas O'Dea, American Catholic Dilemma: An Inquiry into the Intellectual Life (New York: Sheed and Ward, Inc.), 1958.

	Percent Do	
	Viewers	Non-viewers
More of them play musical instruments	27	15
They play more classical and semi-classical music on those	19	7
More collect classical records	34	17
They have more FM radio sets	37	21
They listen to the more cultural stations on the radio	46	24
They like to play chess or do crossword puzzles	11	6
They read more cultural magazines	14	4
More have been reading a book in the past month	55	28
More are reading a difficult book[6]	14	7
More read about their hobbies as well as just practicing them	55	35
More have taken adult education courses	66	44
More of those were in academic subjects	29	8
More have participated in a discussion group with some intellectual content.	24	12

The results become even more striking when we put a number of these cultural behaviors together in an index. Any one taste, say reading books, or liking classical music might be shared by a non-ETV viewer. But the person who participates in several of them and is still a non-viewer is a rare bird.

On a seven point scale of cultural interests covering music, TV, radio, books, and discussions, 61 percent of the non-viewers scored 0 or 1, meaning that they had a substantial interest in no one of these areas of culture or in one only. Among viewers, on the otherhand, about two thirds (68 percent) showed a substantial cultural interest in two or more of the topics explored and about half (48 percent) in three or more of the topics.[7] ETV viewers have a taste for culture which the non-viewers seldom share.

[6]Classical fiction or such non-fiction as philosophy, international affairs, poetry, etc.

[7]Six Guttman subscales were established. A scale of scales was created by dichotomizing between high and low scores on each subscale. This also turned out to be a Guttman scale with a co-efficient of reproduceability of .87.

D. The Seekers of Information

Only slightly less dramatic than the difference between viewers and non-viewers in their avidity for culture is the difference in their avidity for news. The day's news is part of the life of most people, whether viewers or non-viewers. But the viewers go after more informative sources, such as the better newspapers. To a substantial degree they talk about and think about the news more.

	Viewers	Non-viewers
More read a newspaper but not a tabloid	78%	48%
On Sunday more read the New York Times or Herald Tribune	14	2
More read a news magazine	31	19
Slightly more report listening to radio news	53	46
More had belonged to current events discussion groups	10	6
More had conversed about the day's news within the past 24 hours	66	48

There is an interesting difference between viewers and non-viewers in their use of print versus gossip for getting the news. The difference is partly blurred because for all types of respondents the newspaper is the most important news source and TV next most important. But asked about their main source of information about politics other than newspapers, word of mouth is clearly next for non-viewers but ETV viewers also use magazines and books.

Source of Political News "Besides Newspapers"

Proportion citing	Viewers	Non-viewers
Magazines and books	23%	10%
word of mouth	23	29

Reviewing the last two tables we find that although they use news media less, our non-viewers are more nearly, though not quite, on a par with ETV viewers in

all ways of getting the news that do not require reading: radio, TV, and word of mourth. The ETV viewers gain their edge in news consumption via the printed word.

The WGBH aucience follows the news and so it is no surprise to learn that, when asked, they express more interest in acquiring information. We gave our respondents a closed choice question on what they "like about the newspapers." Two of the choices on the card were:

"I like the human interest. I like to read about people."

"I learn about things in the world and about important news."

It was the latter choice, learning, that was overwhelmingly chosen, but by ETV viewers even more than by non-viewers.

Reason for Liking Newspapers

	Proportion of Viewers	Non-viewers
Human interest	17%	31%
Important news	73	58

We asked the same sort of question on what "they like most about the meetings" they attended. Once again the desire to learn came through strongly but for ETV viewers more than for non-viewers. Among the alternatives on the card were:

"I learn things from speeches and discussions I hear."

"It gives me a change from everyday activities."

"I see people I know."

Learning was the chosen motive of most ETV viewers, social contact of non-viewers.

Reason for Liking Club Meetings

	Proportion of Viewers	Non-viewers
Learning	40%	29%
Change	23	30
People	28	41

The avidity to learn shown by the WGBH viewers had one odd and interesting result. Although they were supporters of a non-commercial station which carries no ads, they had no more antipathy to ads than did the non-viewers. If they had any bias against commercialism it was fully offset by their responsiveness to information in whatever form it might come, even in ads. Note that there were no real differences between viewers and non-viewers in their replies to three different questions about ads.

	Proportion of Viewers	Non-viewers
Proportion who did not choose "too many commercials" from a list of terms which they could use to characterize various ETV channels.	55%	53%
Proportion who said they watch the commercials and evinced no dislike	53	56
Proportion who said they learn something from newspaper ads	65	59

WGBH was not chosen by its audience as an escape from commercialism. It was chosen for what it added to their culture and knowledge.

And add to their knowledge it certainly did. We have only sparse and relatively inconsequential information on what particular items of knowledge particular viewers acquired from WGBH. It is often hard for a person to know where he learned a particular fact, and with the small audiences WGBH has for any given show, one has to hunt far before spotting in our data two individuals who had first acquired the same fact from WGBH. We forego the detective job of tracking such clues and simply note that our viewers do report learning things.

Being eager learners, they were also learning from reading and from other media, too, which as we have seen they used a great deal. We gave our respondents a ten-item information quiz. Each respondent was asked to identify:

Fidel Castro
Jim Arness
Nigeria
Tony Curtis
J. Robert Oppenheimer
Brigitte Bardot
Robert Frost
Ralph Bunche
Betty Furness
Mao Tse Tung

Arness, Curtis, Bardot, and Furness were thrown in partly to sustain the morale of respondents who might on the public affairs items find themselves failing every time. But they were also thrown in for a much more serious reason. We did not wish to be intellectual snobs and label those persons who were ignorant of the things we knew as ignorant men. They might know something else instead. An objective study of knowledge cannot start with the assumption that someone who knows of Robert Frost but not Tony Curtis is per se more informed than someone who knows of Tony Curtis but not Robert Frost. There was at least the possibility that rather than dealing with informed and uninformed people, we were dealing with two cultures the members of which were each informed in their own sphere and not in the other.

Is that the case? Here are the figures for the four popular culture characters on our quiz.

	Percent Replying Correctly	
	Viewers	Non-viewers
Jim Arness	56%	56%
Tony Curtis	57	58
Brigitte Bardot	80	77
Betty Furness	74	56

The non-viewers were not better informed about these people. For three out of the four entertainers the results were virtually identical for ETV viewers

and non-viewers. The WGBH viewers do not look down their noses at comedy or the comics, baseball or the twist, Hollywood or slick magazines. They are not aesthetes in a world of their own. They are simply people much like their neighbors in broad interests, who have enough wit to enjoy stretching their minds occasionally, and enough taste to get annoyed an bored by arid stretches of pure banalities. We are not dealing with two cultures. The WGBH viewers are, for much of their lives, part of exactly the same culture as the non-viewers. They share to exactly the same degree as the rest of the population the popular circuses of our society.

A note about Betty Furness. She had just been selling Westinghouse appliances on the political convention telecast half a year before. The political conventions attracted many of our news-hungry ETV viewers. Her polished but trivial performances punctuating the cosmic hamming of the politicians made her a culture heroine of sorts for the more politically interested sectors of the American public. It is ambiguous whether she belongs in the list of popular culture or of public affairs figures.

	Percent Replying Correctly	
	Viewers	Non-viewers
Fidel Castro	92%	84%
Mao Tse Tung	56	23
Robert Frost	51	18
Nigeria	43	18
Ralph Bunche	48	16
J. Robert Oppenheimer	36	10

So we find that our viewers and non-viewers were at one in sharing a popular culture. What of their knowledge of public affairs? Here the picture is very different. The ETV viewers took off from the shared base and also knew about a lot

of other things, too, on some of which the non-viewers knew very little. In the public affairs field the ETV viewers were much better informed.

Treating these six items as a test, the average score obtained by viewers was 55 percent. (One-fifth of them scored 100). The average score of non-viewers was 30 percent (less than 4 percent of them scored 100). The average non-viewer could identify Fidel Castro and one of the other five items.

It is easy to deplore human ignorance. It is easy to be shocked that two-thirds of our WGBH viewers had forgotten who Robert Oppenheimer was, if they ever knew, and that more than half were stumped by Nigeria and Ralph Bunche. But they were alert compared to the non-viewers who must have found this test incredibly hard. Except on Fidel Castro not even one-fourth of our non-viewers gave a right answer on any one item.

The results on Castro are useful in discouraging overquick generalization. Except for him no political item on the list is known to more than one-fourth of the non-viewers and even among the viewers the best known other item is known to no more people than the least known popular culture figure. One would be tempted to generalize that public affairs information gets far less widely known than the acts of entertainers do. But then we note Fidel Castro who substantially outpoints everyone else on the list including Brigitte Bardot. The valid conclusion would seem to be that for the non-viewers the range of public affairs attention is an extraordinarily narrow one. The scope of their public affairs knowledge reflects accurately the coverage in the news sources they use. The tabloid, the five-minute radio news bulletin, or word of mouth conversation are not devoid of political and world news. But it is the one or two top stories of the day which are given space in their small news hole. Berlin, Cuba, a spaceman in orbit, outbreak of a local war, may capture the banner headlines or may be talked about by friends over coffee. What gets lost in this kind of limited news coverage is the wealth of subordinate stories found in a great

newspaper or in a rounded broadcast schedule of documentaries, panels, and commentaries. Years may go by without Robert Frost, Nigeria or Ralph Bunche rating the banner head in the daily papers. Recurrently important, still they are always important at the second level. And it is the second level stories which get filtered out of the inferior media. The WOSU viewers, like the news sources they use, throw a wider net. For them in public affairs, as for everybody in popular culture, the world of interest is a large and complex place with many interests to choose from. They are not experts or professionally committed to following the news, so the average individual will miss half or more of the easy items on our quiz. But the things he does know range over a wide scope of possible foci of interest, corresponding to the numerous departments and story categories of a large metropolitan daily paper or news magazine.

E. People of High Energy

The results already obtained foreshadow our next point: ETV audiences are energetic, active people--doers. We have already noted that they participate more in high culture (music, books, etc.) and in public affairs information. Now we are about to present evidence that they also participate more than non-viewers in an additional series of activities, and in particular that they are more active in the cultural and civic affairs of their communities.

The astonishing thing is that they seem to achieve this greater participation without any less participation in anything else we have measured so far except total television time (which, for ETV viewers, was a few minutes less per day than non-viewers of ETV).

This can only go so far. The day is twenty-four hours long for everybody and time must be found somewhere. But to some degree people of greater energy, drive and capacity, will pack more into the same hours. Our research question is how far this is the case. What are the things ETV viewers do more of, and

what are the things that get displaced to make room for their special tastes.

The general conclusion is that very little gets displaced. The special interests of WCBN viewers get packed in on top of a base of interests and activities shared by the whole society. The tastes of the viewers are catholic and their energy is such that they can consume both what their less motivated neighbors consume and something else besides. This has its implications for ETV programing. It means that the viewers of ETV are for the most part not rebels against the enjoyments of the masses, but rather they are people who share those enjoyments but want something else too.

There is a long list of activities on which we are not surprised to find that WCBN viewers are much more likely to be involved than non-viewers.

	Percent who do	
	Viewers	Non-viewers
More go to lectures	33%	13%
And more have in the past week	7	3
More go to the legitimate theatre	42	24
And more have in the past week	4	1
More take evening courses[5]	17	8
And more have attended in the past week	8	4
More occasionally take part in discussion groups	18	10
And more have in the past week	6	3
More attend club or organization meetings	64	51
And more attend meetings of three or more	16	4
More have ever been active in politics	23	14
And more are active right now	4	2

[5]Adult education courses and discussion groups were asked about in slightly different ways both in the 1940 telephone interviews and in the 511 personal interviews. The picture is consistent and the differences are in the order they should be.

"Have you ever belonged to a discussion group?" (Personal interview)	32%	16%
"Which of the following activities do you take part in? ... A discussion group" (telephone)	18	10
"When did you last belong to one?" currently (personal interview)	10	4
"How recently did you take part?" within week. (telephone)	6	3
"Have you ever taken classes since you were finished with school like evening classes or adult education courses?" (personal interview)	66	44
"Which of the following activities do you take part in? ... An Evening course." (telephone)	17	8
"When did you last take a class?" currently (personal interview)	11	7
"How recently did you?" Within week (telephone).	8	4

There are other activities about which our stereotype of the educated man does not tell us what to expect. And in these, too, WGBH viewers participate as much as or more than non-viewers.

	Viewers	Non-viewers
Slightly more go to the movies	54%	48%
And have in past week	10	9
More have a hobby	75	64
More have two or more hobbies	42	29
More attend sporting events	43	35
And slightly more have in the past week	12	10
Slightly more like to watch sports	88	83
An almost equal number have played at a sport in the past year	53	55

We have yet to find any significant area of life from which the ETV viewers slice the time to do all the extra things they do.[9]

F. Other Differences Between Viewers and Non-viewers

The main things that distinguish ETV viewers from non-viewers we have found to be: higher social status, higher aspiration level, higher cultural level, higher interest in public affairs, and higher energy. We have also noted that viewing ETV goes by families, and that ETV viewers tend to be purposeful, rather than "let the set run," users of television. In the course of our studies we also noted a few other differences which might be briefly noted under the heading of Miscellaneous.

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[9]One suspicion might be that while they do more different things they spend less time on any one of them. That is not the case for most activities about which we asked if they had done it in the past week. WGBH viewers have spent as much of the last week at sports events and movies as have non-viewers.

But there is one small area in player sports where WGBH viewers pick up a little time. Virtually as many of them play some sport, but there are fewer real enthusiasts who play weekly or daily among the viewers. Those who estimate that they had played 41 or more times in the past year were 16 percent of the viewers and 26 percent of the non-viewers.

ETV viewers are slightly more likely to engage in activities along with their families. They are also slightly more likely to engage in them all alone, leaving non-viewers slightly more likely to "go out with the boys" or otherwise play with friends.

ETV viewers like foreign movies. Fifty-one percent go to them in contrast to only 19 percent of non-viewers.

ETV viewers are politically slightly more liberal than non-viewers:

	Viewers	Non-viewers
A few more choose the label liberal for themselves	53%	47%
More, if in charge of radio station, would let someone continue a speech attacking America, rather than cut him off the air	64	50
More rate personal contact between people of different countries as important in solving world problems	39	30
More fail to select military might as important in solving world problems	71	63

But the differences are not great. Ideology is not one of the things which sharply differentiate viewers from non-viewers.

Chapter III

The Television Habits of WGBH Viewers

A. Time Spent on TV

So far we have looked at Boston ETV viewers without reference to their television habits. We have looked at what they do with the rest of their leisure time, and we have found that they do a lot. Does that leave them with time for TV?

We find that ETV viewers spend a little less time on TV of all sorts than do non-viewers, but very little less. The telephone interview was used to estimate (by asking whether the set was on when the interviewer called) the proportion of the evening hours that sets were on. In the homes of ETV viewers, sets were on about two hours and twenty-eight minutes an evening (only a small part of that on WGBH). In homes of non-viewers of ETV, sets were on about eighteen minutes longer.

The fact has some significance because TV viewing is the first activity we have found on which ETV viewers actually do less. That may be an indication of the extent to which TV watching is sometimes not an activity at all but a passivity. Television watching may be just a way of killing time, not a conscious seeking of something. If it is that, it may expand to whatever amount of time is available, which for busy ETV types is less. So the slightly lower TV watching figure for ETV viewers is interesting. But even more interesting is the fact that it differs so little from that of non-viewers.

The gap in TV use between WGBH viewers and non-viewers widens trivially by another five minutes in our respondent's own subjective estimate if we add in week-day afternoon viewing. (We have no telephone co-incidental interviews except for evenings and week ends.) But it narrows by seven minutes in the morning during which 31 percent of WGBH viewers watch TV as against only 16 percent of non-viewers. The viewers are attracted by such sophisticated programs as Continental Classroom and the Today Show. Also, the non-viewers include a larger proportion of blue

collar persons who have to be at work at 7:30 or 8:30 instead of 9:00. The compounding of the two causal variables makes it hard to know to what extent excellent early morning programs have built a special audience for themselves, but it is nonetheless significant that morning TV in Boston does get a little more of the high caliber ETV audience who otherwise watch TV less.

Despite all these small differences, the point to be re-emphasized is that TV viewing totals up to substantially the same amount for ETV viewers as for non-viewers. But what, why, and how they watch is not necessarily the same.

B. The Uses of TV

In particular the psychological uses to which ETV viewers and non-viewers put TV are notably different. There are few TV addicts watching WGBH. For our data on this topic we owe a debt of gratitude to the Bureau of Applied Social Research at Columbia University. At the same time as we were starting our Boston study, Bernard Berelson and Garry Steiner were starting a study of commercial TV sponsored by the Columbia Broadcasting System. Berelson asked us if we would conduct in Boston, among our sample, a group of their interviews. In addition we included a few Columbia questions on our own form. The initial intent was a technical one--to permit estimation, when the two studies appeared, of whether differences in conclusions were due to the fact that we were working in one city, Boston, while they were working nationally, or due to differences in interviewing and sampling technique, or due to differences of judgment and interpretation. The main question we borrowed was a schedule on reasons for watching TV and listening to radio.

Each respondent was handed a form and told:

> Now let's talk for a moment about reasons for watching television.
>
> Here is a list of possible reasons. When you watch TV, how often does each of these reasons apply to you?

Some fifteen reasons were listed. Among them a few might be taken as use of TV for social purposes. Fewer ETV viewers admitted they used TV in that way either "usually" or "occasionally."

	Percent who do	
	Viewers	Non-viewers
I turn the set on just to keep me company when I am alone	32%	42%
I watch because everyone I know is watching and I want to be able to talk about it afterwards	22	26
I watch mainly to be sociable when others are watching	46	58

A couple of other reasons might be taken as use of TV as an escape, that is, something to relax into when tedium, anxiety, or insomnia attack. TV was used for this purpose substantially as much by ETV viewers as by non-viewers.

	Percent who do	
	Viewers	Non-viewers
I watch because there is nothing else to do at the time	35%	38%
I watch to get away from the ordinary cares and problems of the day	37	37

Giving a number of other reasons might be taken as an indicator of television addiction. Such replies are given less often by ETV viewers.

	Percent who do	
	Viewers	Non-viewers
I watch because I'm afraid I might be missing something good	22%	29%
I keep watching to put off doing something else I should do	14	19
I start on one show and then get stuck for the rest of the evening	30	40

A closely related set of replies, which are also more common among non-viewers of ETV, assert a liking for television as such, though we should perhaps avoid the word addiction because no psychological compulsion is suggested by the wording of these reasons.

	Percent who do	
	Viewers	Non-viewers
I watch just for background while I am doing something else	22%	34%
I watch just because I feel like watching television	59	77
I watch just because it is a pleasant way to spend an evening	66	83

C. TV as an Information Source

Only one reason draws a positive reply especially from WGBH viewers:

---I watch because I think I can learn something.---

That is asserted to be usually or occasionally true by 85 percent of the viewers and also by 73 percent of the non-viewers. For both viewers and non-viewers alike, this is a very substantial magnitude of reply which we are willing to discount somewhat for a halo effect, since everyone knows that learning is a good thing. But it cannot be discounted completely. The desire to learn is a strong motive for watching TV, particularly strong among the ETV viewers but present among the non-viewers too.

We have some further evidence that this is the case. It will be recalled that we asked each respondent to tell us about the most recent conversation outside his household which he had had about a TV program. Three quarters of the respondents could recall such. Many of the programs they discussed were informational programs. Among ETV viewers informational programs actually outpointed

entertainment programs 39 percent to 34 percent in the conversations. Among non-ETV-viewers, discussion of entertainment programs predominated, but not overwhelmingly. Informational programs were the subject of 26 percent of the conversations, entertainment programs the subject of 44 percent. This is presumably a smaller difference than in the average ratings of the two sets of programs, a result which suggests that people may think and talk more about the relatively few serious programs they see than about the entertainment that fills their evenings.

Let us add still more evidence that for ETV viewers and non-viewers both, but to different degrees, TV is a substantial information source. We asked each respondent to name something he had learned from TV apart from the news, and then we also asked each to generalize, "do you feel you learn things from watching TV?" By either test most people were apparently learning. Two-thirds (68 percent of viewers and 66 percent of non-viewers) affirmed that they were learning in reply to the general question, and they generally could prove it by citing something they had learned.

In such citations of specific learning experiences the ETV viewers do differ from the non-viewers. Though both equally claimed that they were learning, the ETV viewers were better able to cite examples, a difference which may be attributable to nothing more than IQ. Although only 34 percent of non-viewers had said they did not learn from TV, a few more, 40 percent, could not give any examples. Among the viewers, on the other hand, while 32 percent said they learned nothing from TV, all but 26 percent could cite examples of things they had learned even with the news excluded. At least 6 percent disproved their own critical generalization.

The viewers and non-viewers learned from different programs. (Note that these are answers covering all of TV, not just ETV.) In more than half of the instances where a non-viewer indicated the specific program from which he had

learned, it was either live coverage or a drama (and about equally for those two). In more than half the instances in which a WGBH viewer indicated the specific program from which he had learned, it was either an instructional program or a documentary.

The kinds of things they claimed to learn differed between the viewers and the non-viewers. Political information (by 21 percent of viewers and 19 percent of non-viewers) and fashions and fads (by 10 percent of each) were the things both cited. But viewers also cited facts about art, literature, and music (15 percent), science (15 percent), and foreign countries (9 percent). Non-viewers less often cited these.[10] The emphasis among the non-viewers was on information and technique, politics, fashions, and science. The attention of the viewers encompassed these items too, but also culture and the arts.

D. Program Preferences

Both viewers and non-viewers were given an opportunity to name favorite programs across the board, regardless of whether on WGBH or on commercial outlets. The favorite programs of viewers and non-viewers did differ, but, unfortunately, not because WGBH viewers found most of their favorites on the educational station.

The favorites for WGBH viewers were mostly found among standard commercial offerings. Forty-five percent of WGBH viewers listed either a variety or MC personality show among their favorites. Second in order, 31 percent mentioned a mystery. And third, 22 percent mentioned a Western.

But while this is sobering, and makes us realize that ETV viewers share with non-viewers that standard set of American or human passions that Hollywood and Madison Avenue cater to, we should not conclude that the tastes of viewers and non viewers are alike. There are some program types which show no differences. Variety shows and sporting events are equally popular with both. Mysteries, quiz

[10] Art, literature, music, 1 percent; science 9 percent; and foreign countries 4 percent.

shows and situation comedies get on the order of 50 percent more elections as favorites from non-viewers than from viewers. On the other hand educational programs (including ones not on WGBH) are noted as favorites by eleven percent of viewers, one percent of non-viewers. Art and music, panel discussion, news reports, and news specials are in general named about twice as often by WGBH viewers as by non-viewers. The most frequently noted category among those, panel discussions, contains a favorite program of 20 percent of WGBH viewers. Most people named two or three favorite programs though a few named four or five. Suppose we score a person one point for naming each of a panel program, a news program, an art or good music program, or an educational program as a favorite. WGBH viewers scored on the average .7 such choices apiece, while non-viewers averaged .3 such choices apiece, a difference if not an enormous one. The average viewer made his .7 high level choices while also choosing 1.7 lower level favorite programs. The average non-viewer made his .3 high level choices while also choosing 2.2 lower level favorite programs. The lower level material is preferred by both viewers and non-viewers, but it is significantly leavened in the favorite diet of the viewers, not in that of the non-viewers.

E. How Satisfied are They?

Thus somewhere among the vast panolpy of programs offered by commercial TV, our educational TV clientele locates its favorite programs. Somehow ETV is not capturing their enthusiasms. It has their approval and confidence as has been shown in this report. It has some small portion of their viewing time. (Our estimate for Boston was about three quarters of an hour a week out of between fifteen and twenty hours of viewing time.) But commercial television still has their primary attention and preference.

We gave each respondent a chance to characterize which was his favorite among the four Boston TV channels. Sixteen percent of the WGBH viewers chose WGBH.

Eighty-four percent divided their choices among the three commercial channels, none of which fell as low as 16. Somehow, educational television is not fully meeting the cravings of its audience. That may be because it is playing a specialized role which fulfills only one part of their wants. The man who enjoys a program on Japanese brush painting does not necessarily want classes all the time. He may also enjoy spending part of his evening collapsed in a chair watching Gunsmoke. Perhaps educational television is destined to play a subordinate and supplementary role even for its own audience, filling in a piece of what alert, intelligent, educated people want which commercial TV will not give.

But if that charitable interpretation of the low preference and viewing scores achieved by WGBH in competition with the commercial stations were to be accepted, then the members of the WGBH audience should be satisfied with television as a whole. Their need for a little pepper and spice added to a basic diet of standard TV fare would be adequately met by the present arrangement of one very strong ETV channel along with three commercial ones. But they are not satisfied.

One of the questions asked was:

> "There has been a lot of talk about TV lately. Of these two points of view which would you agree with more?"
>
> a. The programs on TV are generally pretty good and shouldn't be changed too much.
>
> b. The programs on TV are not very good and need a lot of improvement.

On the question thus formulated the majority of the population turned its thumbs down on the present state of TV. This is a result quite at variance with that reported by many other studies and the reason lies in a difference in question wording. The usual question form, with variation in detail, is to ask whether TV is very good, good, fair, or poor. A response set that every poller is familiar with leads people to pick an upper middle level of approved, such as "good." With a three or more positioned range of choice, people prefer to pick the middle

rather than an extreme, and when offered only the choice of using pleasant or perjorative terms they choose the former. The etiquette of our culture, which carries over to the survey situation, requires that our over-all judgements always be expressed on the positive side even if the object described is then cut to pieces in detail. It is rare to find an efficiency rating or book review where the overall rating is less than "good," no matter what follows in the text. We know of one market research study in which the "excellent, very good, good, fair, poor" categories were used in which the answer "good" was predictive of least use of the product.

Aware of these response sets that guarantee an endorsement of present television if the usual question was used, we framed our question differently. In the first place we excluded the chance for a middle choice. It was a forced choice between two alternatives. In the second place we avoided making either alternative a flat negative word. The negative judgment was linked to the prospect of improvement while the positive judgment required a vote in favor of leaving things as they are.

With this question form, 61 percent of our cross section sample of the Boston population said the programs are not very good. Among non-viewers, that fell only to 58 percent. Among WGBH viewers the negative judgments rose to 70 percent.

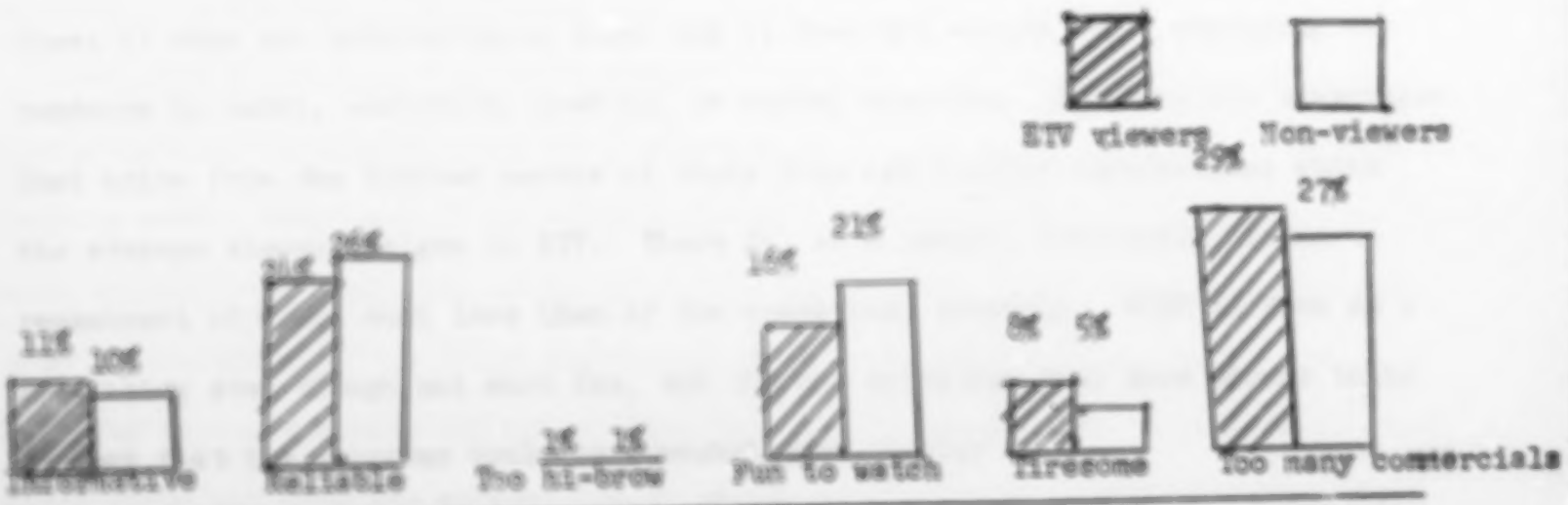
And so we cannot avoid the conclusion that something is lacking in the present situation especially for the ETV viewers. Commercial television gives them some things they want, witness their choices of commercial programs as favorites, their extensive watching of CTV, and their common knowledge of and interest in the popular culture of the nation be it in entertainment, games, or sports. ETV also gives them some of the things they want, as we have made abundantly clear in the preceding pages. But there is still something missing. The fare available to them be it from CTV or ETV, is not all they want.

F. How Viewers Use WGBH

WGBH may not broadcast the favorite fare of its viewers, but they like it nonetheless. They may share with the rest of the public a taste for popular comedy and drama, but unlike some of the rest of the public they add a genuine appreciation of the sort of thing WGBH provides, witness the image of the station.

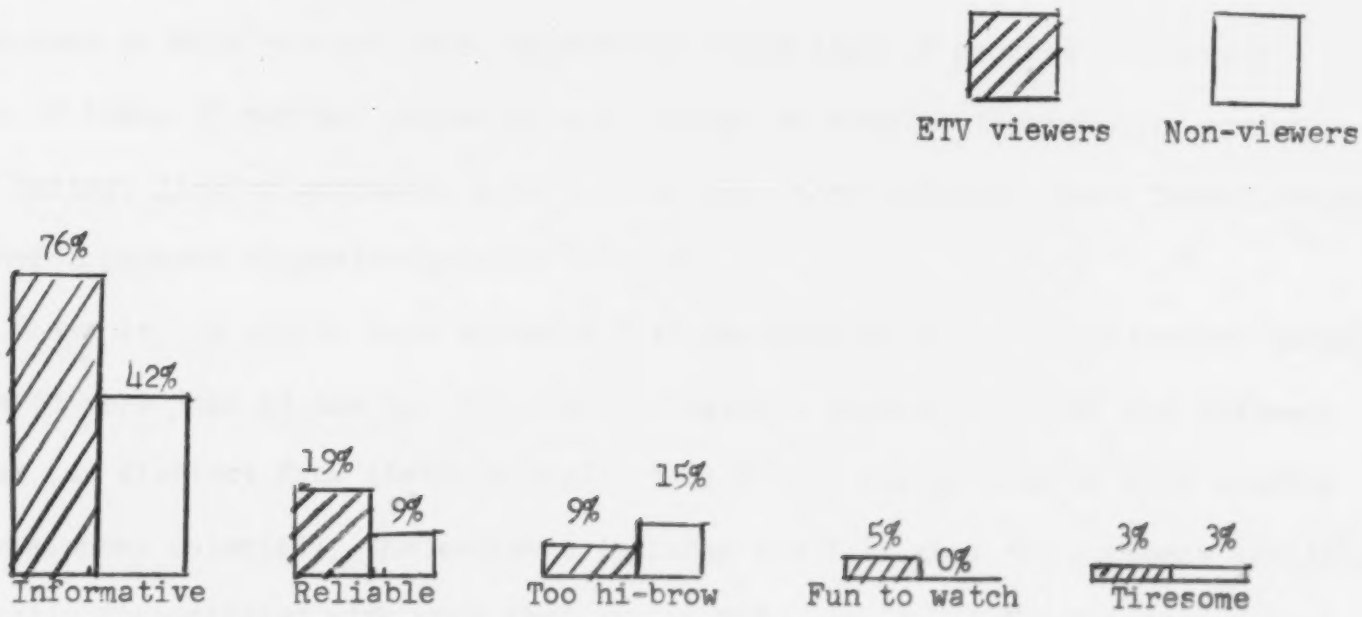
The image of WGBH is that it is informative and reliable, not especially fun to watch but certainly not tiresome, perhaps a little too highbrow. The image came out by presenting our respondents, both viewers and non-viewers, with a series of adjectival phrases and then asking them to pick the phrases that best fit each channel--both the commercial channels and the educational ones.

Viewers and non-viewers alike had a remarkably similar image of the commercial channels. (We average responses for the three commercial stations.) Except for the fact that ETV viewers find CTV somewhat less fun and more often tiresome, the profiles are identical, demonstrating once more that both viewers and non-viewers to a large degree share common orientations towards the popular part of culture. They both saw the commercial channels as fun sources substantially more than information sources.[11] They both found that they could count upon CTV for what the viewers expected of it, yet both complained about commercials and sometimes even found the programming to pall.



[11] But for WGBH viewers the mention of fun outpaces the mention of information by but 16 to 11, while for non-viewers the ratio is 21 to 10. The gratification ETV viewers got, even from CTV, reflects once more their avidity for information.

WGBH had a very different profile, and naturally a different one for its viewers and non-viewers.



Here the emphasis is overwhelmingly on information with very little sense of its being any fun. Criticism focusses on ETV for being highbrow but not for being tiresome. CTV is more often accused of being boring than ETV. Among some critics of ETV who watch it for professional reasons it is sometimes accused of being boring. The public who watch only what they want, do not share this feeling. They are not bored as they sometimes are with CTV because ETV does not talk down to them; it does not underestimate them; and it does not secure their unwilling attendance by habit, addiction, lead-in, or social pressure. So there are advantages that arise from the limited sector of their time and limited expectations which the average viewer assigns to ETV. There is, as a result, remarkably little resentment of WGBH, much less than of the commercial channels. WGBH is seen as a good thing even though not much fun, and the one criticism that does appear is to suggest that the programs could be somewhat more popular.

The same suggestion, and with the same frequency, occurred in another context. Respondents were asked what kinds of programs they would show if they were in charge of an ETV station. Most replied by naming specific program types (e.g. science), and the distirbution of these simply mirrored WGBH's actual schedule. However, 10 percent of WGBH viewers made suggestions other than of program categories. Seven of these 10 percent suggested such things as simpler terminology, communicate better, lighter approach, more interesting, more colorful, less formal, while another 2 percent suggested greater variety.

There is, in short, some evidence that the WGBH audience would respond happily if, even more than it now is, the station became a general cultural and informational (as distinct from instructional) station with a good deal of high quality entertainment material. The evidence includes the fact that the audience is quite basically discontented with what they get on CTV, yet, for lack of better material of its kind, they keep watching it anyhow. Their discontent, as we have argued elsewhere, is not radical. They are not looking for a new and different kind of material from that which TV already offers. They are interested in the subjects it covers and amused by its kinds of entertainments. But they want them better. Too often the programs offered are boring or distasteful, not enough to drive them from the audience, but enough to engender malaise. A medium that met the same craving intelligently and tastefully would be welcome.

Further evidence of the ETV public's desire for high grade but general interest programing is contained in the few criticisms, just noted above which they do make of WGBH. They want it to communicate more entertainingly. Evidence to the same effect arose also when we looked at the shows among those offered which they said they preferred. We found the favorites to be programs of the kind--Open End, the Boston Symphony and Louis Lyons News--that sometimes are shown on CTV, and which stand out from the general run of standard television in quality rather than type.

Each respondent who watched WGBH was asked whether he and each person in his family had a favorite program broadcast on it. He was also asked whether he had personally seen each of a dozen programs which were then of leading interest to the station. The results were as follows:[12]

	Viewers		Marginal Cases	
	Had ever seen	A Favorite	Had ever ever	A Favorite
Boston Symphony	58%	10%	33%	6%
Open End	52	16	25	8
Louis Lyons News	49	10	22	0
President's Press Conference	44	0	27	1
Science Reporter	40	1	19	1
Eliot Norton Reviews	34	2	17	0
Ask the Candidate	28	0	14	0
Grass Roots Voters 1960	21	0	7	0
Gardener's Almanac	19	1	11	0
Performance	14	0	11	0
Julius Caesar	10	0	6	0
Make Believe Clubhouse	8	0	6	0

There are various reasons to note why some programs get to be seen but not chosen as favorite. First, a trivial matter, some were specials that were on just once or only during a brief period. People may enjoy those but do not name them as favorites. These included Julius Caesar, and the two special 1960 election items: Grass Roots Voters and Ask the Candidate. Perhaps the President's Press Conference belongs in the same category of programs people think of as an occasional special rather than as a recurrent program. Or perhaps in addition

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[12] Thirty-nine percent of viewers and 83 percent of marginal cases had no favorite program.

people watched it out of respect and awareness of its importance without enjoying it very much. Eisenhower conferences were hardly dramatic.

Make Believe Clubhouse is a children's program, presumably seen by adults in the household while the children watched, but hardly the adult's favorite.

Thus we are left, among those programs not spontaneously picked as favorites, with two programs which nonetheless get a wide audience, Science Reporter and Eliot Norton Reviews, and two which do not, Gardener's Almanac and Performance.

These results are odd but instructive. They demonstrate once more how very different the audiences for different programs may be.

Science Reporter and Eliot Norton Reviews, the programs which cast a wide net, both share Open End's formula of an MC and interesting guests.[13] Science Reporter is an M.I.T. program in which scientists are interviewed about and demonstrate current research. Eliot Norton, who followed Louis Lyons on Tuesdays, reviews a theatre opening, bringing into the studio with him an actor, author, or other guest connected with the show. These two programs are both at considerably more technical and specialized level than Open End and do not feature personality appeal as much. But to some degree, at least, they share its character and broad appeal.

In contrast Gradener's Almanac is straight information, undoubtedly of interest to a portion of the audience, but to a very special portion. To the management of WGBH its small audience is a surprise, for no program produces more letters. As many as 1,000 letters have been received in a single week, requesting from the station the Department of Agriculture pamphlets it offers. By our figures these correspondents in a single week amount to about 2 percent of all the regular viewers who remember ever having seen it. Its small audience is deeply responsive. It seems possible that most of its regular viewers have at some point or other written to the station. So the small audience of Gardener's Almanac may well be worth the station's time. The same kind of specialized audience probably follows the live chamber music broadcast

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[13] It is worth noting that about one-third of our WGBH viewer respondents named some program which uses this format as among their favorites whether on ETV or CTV. Open End, the most often mentioned was closely followed by Jack Paar.

on those weeks when the Boston Symphony is off the air.

It is, however, the three run-away successes, the Boston Symphony, Open End, and Louis Lyons' news report which are most instructive to us. They not only drew the station's regular viewers, but even a substantial number of those marginal cases whom we here use as a comparison group for the viewers since non-viewers are irrelevant. These programs have the ingredients to make ETV audiences grow. Unfortunately it would not be easy to produce two or three times over material of the quality of these three programs. The talents are rare that are represented in each of them. It is hard to come by the combination of warm human being, personality, showman, professional expertise, wide knowledge, and sophisticated interpretation represented, for example, in a newscast by Louis Lyons, the Curator of the Nieman fellowships at Harvard. Yet it is equally clear that if programing of that level could be doubled or tripled there would be a real demand for it. The bulk of that one fifth of the public which is the WGBH audience is looking for entertainment and information, not in a program formula very different from what is on commercial TV but at a much higher level of quality. Their favorite programs and the programs they watch the most are precisely those which could equally well appear on commercial TV and indeed sometimes do. They are programs distinguished only by excellence, not by belonging to a special educational category. A station which could provide that sort of programing most of the time would absorb more of their time and become their favorite in a way which ETV is not today.

As things stand today WGBH viewers do not turn to the station in a routine way to pick up a sample of its programs. They usually turn to the station to pick up a pre-selected program. Most often, 40 percent of the time, they had picked the last program they had seen from a newspaper listing, and if one adds TV Guide (7 percent) and WGBH's own guide (only 1 percent), then almost half of the viewers claimed to have picked it from a printed listing. Word-of-mouth

recommendations added another 9 percent. The two remaining modes of choosing a program, dial flipping and habit were used in 18 and 17 percent of the cases respectively. Twenty-three percent claim to watch some program regularly, while 64 percent say they pick programs one at a time.

There is one other way in which people get to see programs. Someone else in the household may pick them. The average size viewing group of a WGBH program as found in our telephone co-incidental interviews was 1.8 persons. Any 100 average groups would have besides 100 respondents, 27 other adult females,[14] 20 other adult males, 10 children over 14, and 25 children under 14. Under these circumstances the respondent might often watch ETV programs without the desire as well as sometimes fail to watch programs he would like to see. But in practice our WGBH viewers are not particularly conscious of such compulsion. Family tastes are reported to be reasonably homogeneous. They may not have started out that way. Some one member may initially have set the family's viewing habits. But by the time of the interview people felt that they were seeing the programs they wished to see. Only 17 percent of viewers reported that they way WGBH programs because they were picked by someone else. Sixty-eight percent said the choice was their own.

Thus the viewing pattern is predominantly one of conscious selection of individual programs. Such a pattern would never lead to very large amounts of viewing, or, more important, would not allow for audience growth if it were the only pattern of viewing. For the audience to grow, people somehow have to experience programs that they have not seen before. Fortunately, pre-selection from published lists is not the only mode of choosing. About one tenth of choices

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[14] While females were in the majority as they are in the population, men were actually better represented in the WGBH than in the CTV audience. Nineteen percent of women with TV sets and 23 percent of men with TV sets were ETV viewers.

were, it will be recalled, recommended by someone else; one sixth are explicitly chosen by another member of the household, and another sixth are chosen by dial flipping. These mechanisms provide enough fresh exposure to programs other than established favorites so as to allow effective audience building.

Chapter IV

The Prospect for Audience Growth

Reach and Frequency

The audience of WGBH can be measured in two dimensions, reach and frequency. Reach refers to the proportion of the whole population included in it, which turns out to be about one fifth. Frequency refers to how often these people use the medium, which turns out to be fairly low, perhaps on the average once every five days.

Awareness of the fact that there are two dimensions clarifies our thinking about the prospects of audience growth. It can grow in reach and it can grow in frequency, but these do not necessarily go together. The evidence suggests that there are prospects for both kinds of growth, but the prospects for growth in reach are small. The great opportunity is for growth in frequency.

There is some evidence that the audience was growing in reach even during the period of our study. A few individuals whom the telephone interviews scored as viewers replied as non-viewers a year later, and a few who originally scored as non-viewers replied as viewers a year later. Now most of this variation is better considered instability of question response than genuine trend in behavior. But there is apparently a small difference between the directions of flow, which can be taken seriously. About 10 percent of our viewers did not reply as viewers on re-interview, and about 14 percent of non-viewers talked as if they were viewers when re-interviewed. The telephone survey questions and probes were not repeated in detail so that exact equivalence cannot be established, but the suggestion is that WGBH had gained more people than it lost during the year.

There is every reason to expect this trend to continue slowly. The educational level of the population is rising. There is an ever larger proportion of the population who have the characteristics of culture, education, and occupation which distinguish the WGBH viewer.

The Decisions Experiment

Using 2,000 of the 9,140 telephone respondents, three groups were selected:

1) a Control Group of 500 people who received no stimulus to watch the program and who were called only after the experiment was completed;

2) a Mail Sample Group of 1,000 people to whom a mailing advertising Decisions 1960 was sent and which contained a coupon which could be checked off in one of three ways: to get a free map, to send money for a Decisions 1960 kit, or to join a discussion group. Following this mailing this group was interviewed by phone.

3) The most highly stimulated group, the Critics Panel, were telephoned and asked to act as critics of the "Decisions" program. They were told that after they had watched the program they would be called back to be interviewed for their opinions and suggestions.

The replies from the mailing and its effects were negligible and we consider it no further. Few mail recipients saw the Decisions programs.

The critics are the interesting group. Of the 265 members of our panel who promised to watch a specific program only 94 did so. Of these only 14 were non-viewers of WCBN and 16 were marginal cases. We got their comments by phone within a few days after the program.

A year later we phoned them again without reference to the Decisions experiment. We simply repeated our standard telephone interview about their recent TV viewing. By that time a couple more individuals moved away or were otherwise lost. So we were finally reduced to 28 individuals who had not been viewers originally, who had cooperated in watching a single Decisions show and who were available a year later.

Of these 28 individuals 14 were now WCBN viewers. Of 28 controls only 5 had

become viewers in the meantime.[15] The numbers are very small but the trend is extraordinary. The flattery of being asked to be a critic and the experience of watching had hooked some.

This same result was obtained in a small experiment within the San Francisco Bay Area.

It should be noted, however, that these persons were to some degree self-selected. Only 7 percent of the non-viewers and 36 percent of the marginal cases whom we asked to watch Decisions did so. This dismal fact spotlights the problem of extending reach. If once people can be hooked into the audience of ETV, a substantial proportion can be won.[16] But it is hard to get them to expose themselves in the first place unless they are so inclined already.

Perhaps, it is not only hard to get non-viewers to expose themselves to ETV, but hard to the point of near-impossibility. A station manager cannot afford the kind of personal stimulation and flattery that we successfully used with a handful of individuals in the Decisions experiment. Without such audience-building efforts it may be hard to the point of impossibility to rapidly increase the reach of ETV among non-viewers because these non-viewers are such very different persons form viewers. The strongest evidence on this point is that provided by our matched samples.

The Matched Non-Viewers: Why Don't They View?

The average non-viewer, with low education, low aspirations, low cultural level, low information, is clearly not a good candidate for ETV. But are there

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[15] As one would expect, it occurred that marginal cases became viewers and the non-viewers became marginal cases more often than complete conversions, from non-viewer to viewer, occurred. Of the 14 non-viewers 6 remained non-viewers, 5 became marginal cases, and 3 became viewers. Of the 14 marginal cases, 11 became viewers and 1 a non-viewer. The results are from a study by Bruce R. Lang.

[16] Cf. Hilde T. Himmelweit, A.N. Oppenheim, and Pamela Vince, Television and the Child (London, New York: Oxford University Press), 1958, for a similar result when there was only one channel available in England.

not among the non-viewers a significant number of people who are more like the viewers? Even among the natural ETV audience, the college educated, the professionals, Etc., it now gets less than half the public.

WCBH got

34% of the respondents whose family income was over $10,000.

32% of the respondents in professional families.

32% of the college educated.

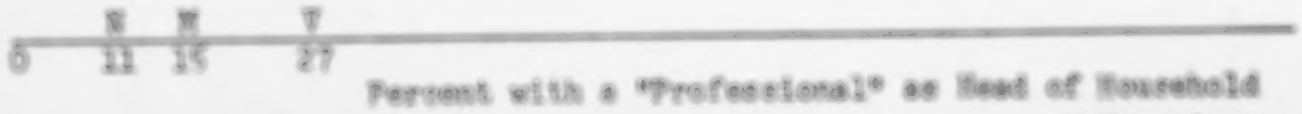
37% of those with postgraduate education.

So the question arises as to whether non-viewers of high social status and education are really the same kind of people as the viewers--people who might be won to ETV but for current habits or other circumstantial matters--or does some profound difference set them apart as quite different kinds of people who, despite their education, are not good candidates for ETV.

To test the potential for audience-building among the high status non-viewers, we developed a matched sample of non-viewers who each resembled a viewer on major control variables.

The over-all conclusion is that the matched non-viewers are hardly more promising as clients for WCBH than the typical non-viewers. True, they have more education, but they do not have more culture. True, they have more income, but they fall short on aspirations. We matched them with the audience of WCBH as far as we could, but one does not have to look far to discover how different they are.

The samples were matched on their own occupation but not on the occupations of their fathers or spouses. We find that matched non-viewers less often come from professional families, even though many of them have become professionals.



And those who did not become professionals have less aspiration toward so doing. We asked respondents who would have liked more education what they would have liked to have studied if they had gone further. The largest number mentioned studies for a high profession such as law, medicine. The aspiration level of matched non-viewers was more like that of non-viewers.

Percent Who would have Liked to Study for a Profession

N-Non-viewers
M-Matched non-viewers
V-Viewers

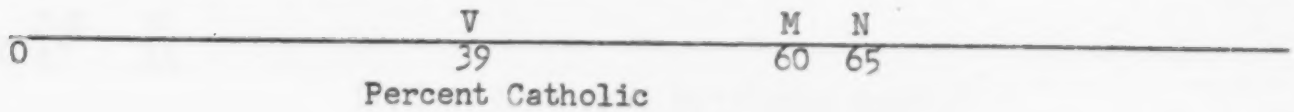
Many of them aspire to semi-professional roles such as nursing or optometry.

Percent Who would have Liked to Study for a Semi-profession

The matching covered urban-surban residence, but it did not cover they type of home they lived in. Non-viewers, matched or non-matched alike were less likely to have a one-family home and more likely to live in a two family dwelling.

Percent Living in One-Family Dwellings

We should have matched on religion, but had not asked about that on the telephone interview, and so could not. Here is a major source of the difference between our viewers and their matches. The non-viewers who are like viewers in education, occupation, income, etc., but still do not watch ETV are likely to be Catholics.



Percent Catholic

Percent Jewish

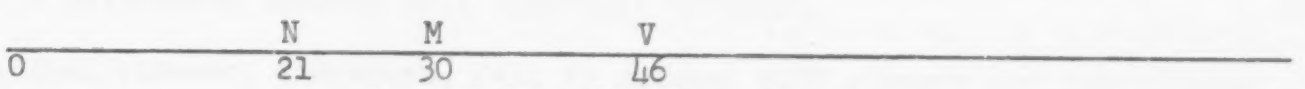
And so on each index of social aspiration which we can measure, but which we did not use as a control in matching, the matched non-viewers turn out to be like other non-viewers, not like viewers.

It is the same for culture. The matched non-viewers care little for it. We listed above some 14 measures on which we compared viewers with non-viewers. Now we add the matched non-viewers to the comparison.

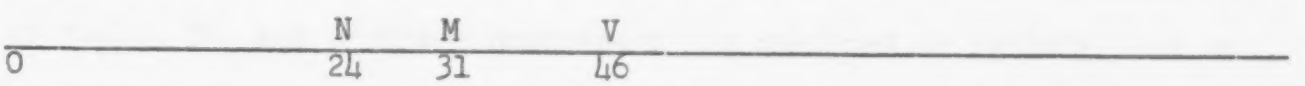
Percent Who Play Musical Instruments

Percent Who Play Classical or Semi-Classical Music on Those

Percent Who Collect Classical Records



Percent Who Have FM Radio Set

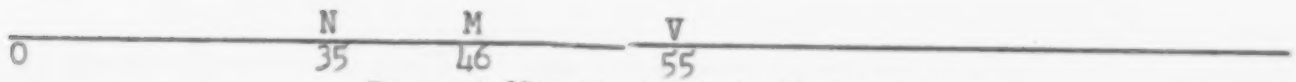


Percent Playing Chess or Crossword Puzzles

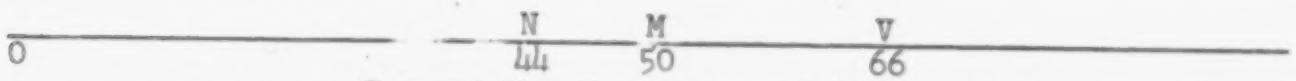
Percent Reading Cultural Magazines

Percent Who Have Read Book in Past Month

Percent Reading A Difficult Book



Percent Who Read About Their Hobbies



Percent Who Have Taken Adult Courses

Percent Who Have Taken These Courses in Academic Subjects

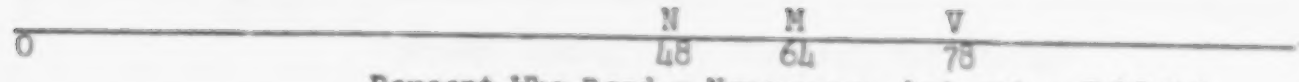
Percent Who Have Participated in Discussion Group

Except in radio habits and reading about hobbies, which are easy forms of cultural expression, the matched non-viewers are almost like any non-viewers.

In their interest in current news the matched non-viewers do a little better. Culture may be beyond them, but politics and public affairs are a form of serious interest that to a limited degree they are ready to appreciate. Politics is the intellectual fare of the half-educated and that is as true in the United States as it is in a developing country or a communist movement.

The matched viewers, therefore, fall in between WGBH viewers and non-viewers in their interest in public information. They have a degree of concern which the news slots of radio, TV, and ordinary newspapers are designed to satisfy, and in which ETV also tries to play a role.

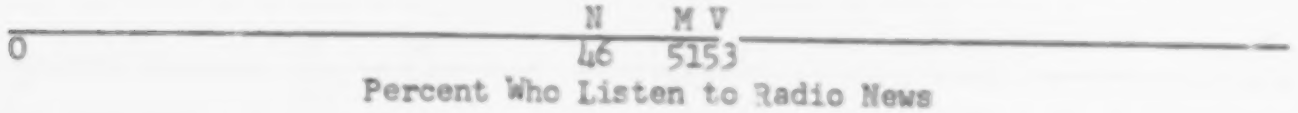
We listed above fourteen behaviors which represented attempts to be well informed and compared viewers with non-viewers regarding them. Now let us see where the matched non-viewers fall.



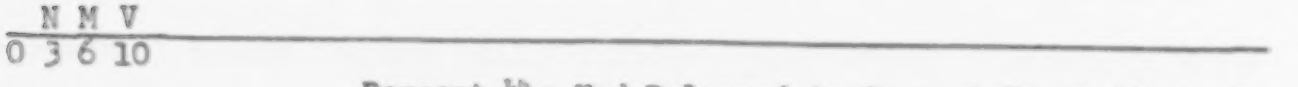
Percent Who Read a Newspaper, but not a Tabloid

Percent Who Read N.Y. Times or Tribune on Sunday

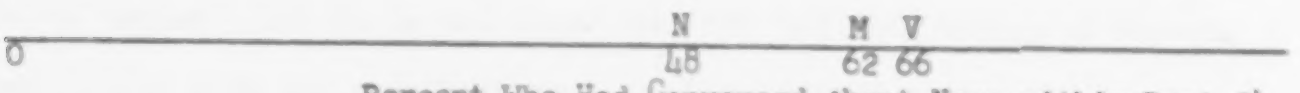
Percent Who Read a News Magazine



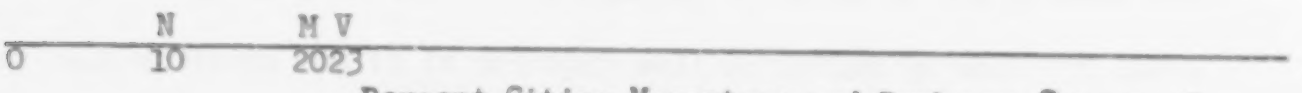
Percent Who Listen to Radio News



Percent Who Had Belonged to Current Event Discussion Groups



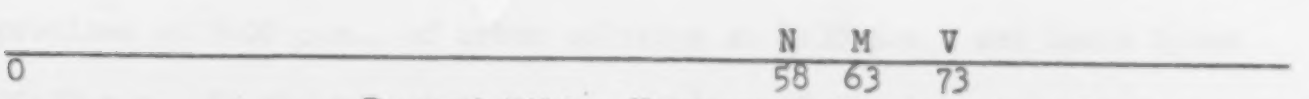
Percent Who Had Conversed About News within Past 24 Hours



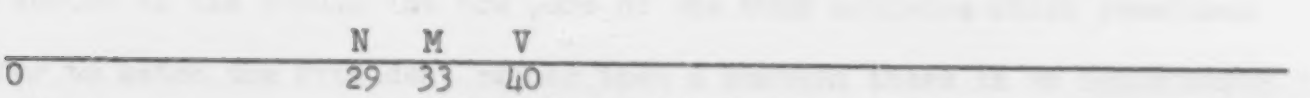
Percent Citing Magazines and Books as Source of Political News

Percent Citing Word-of-Mouth as Source of Political News

Percent Liking Newspapers for Human Interest



Percent Liking Newspapers for Important News



Percent Liking Club Meetings for Learning

Percent Liking Club Meetings for Change

Percent Liking Club Meetings for Meeting People

Corresponding to their intermediate interest in news sources, matched non-viewers do intermediately well on the news quiz. Their median score fell between that of the viewers and non-viewers.

An oversimple interpretation of these results would be that if ETV is to extend its reach it should feature public affairs broadcasting. Certainly it is in this area, rather than culture that some non-viewers have serious interests which could be tapped. But it is not clear that ETV has much chance of tapping that in competition with the excellent news coverage provided by some of commercial TV. The level of interest in information revealed by the matched non-viewers was only moderate and it is probably well satisfied by what CTV makes available.

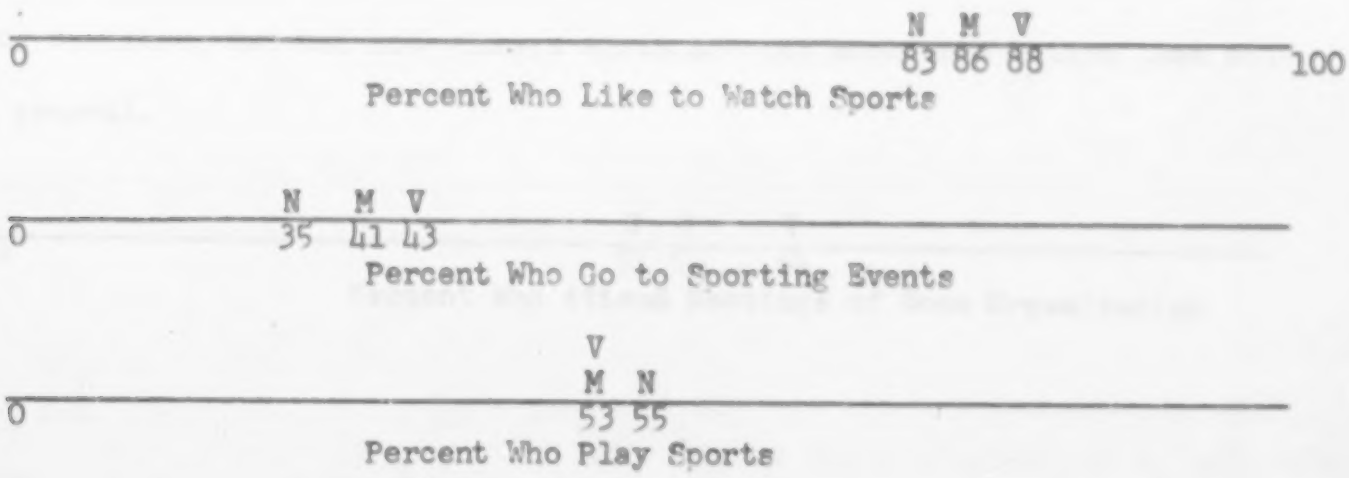
However, there may be one area of possible competition, namely news and news features in prime time. CTV will not give its best hours over to this interest. WGBH will and to some extent does. Louis Lyons broadcasts the news at 6:30 p.m., and his news discussion program, Backgrounds, at 6:45p.m. On one typical day this was followed by the President's press conference at 7:00 p.m., a discussion of military problems at 8:00 p.m., of urban politics at 8:30 p.m., and Louis Lyons again at 10:30 p.m. To the extent that some public affairs interest exists in a limited sector of the public not now part of the WGBH audience which sometimes would prefer to watch the President rather than a Western there is an opportunity for audience building by further mixing in news with cultural features between 7 and 10 p.m.

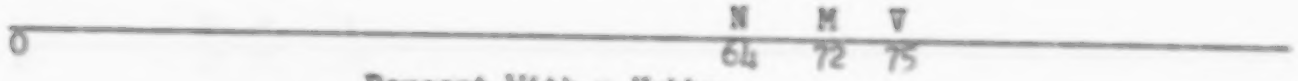
If matched non-viewers are as we portray them much less aspiring than the viewers, much less interested in culture, and moderately less interested in public affairs, then we should already be able to predict a good deal about how they spend their leisure time. And indeed we can: the surprises are few. When we compared viewers with non-viewers we found the viewers to be extremely active. Even in the mass activities of the non-viewers, such as sports and movies, they were on a par. In social and political activities the viewers participated substantially more, and in activities with a large intellectual element very much more.

Matched non-viewers are naturally like the rest in universal activities like sports. They are essentially like the non-viewers in intellectual activities like theatre. The only surprise is how inactive they are in social and political activities. Their moderate interest in news and public affairs turns out to be a spectator interest. The same low aspiration level which is reflected in their and their father's career goals has kept them from trying to influence the world around them by politics.

Let us review fourteen comparisons between viewers and non-viewers and see where the matched non-viewers fit in.

First, there are those activities in which non-viewers also participate widely. Matched non-viewers do not differ in any systematic way.





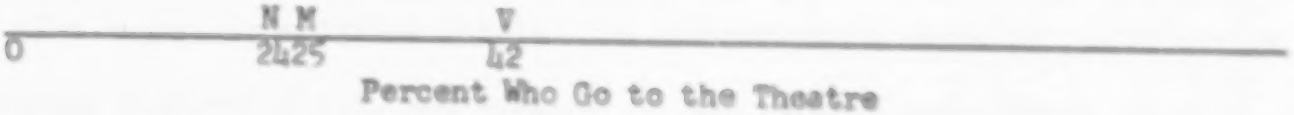
Percent With a Hobby

Percent with Two or More Hobbies

Percent Who Go to the Movies

Next there are activities with a substantial intellectual element. Non-viewers and matched non-viewers alike participate little in these.

Percent Who Go to Lectures

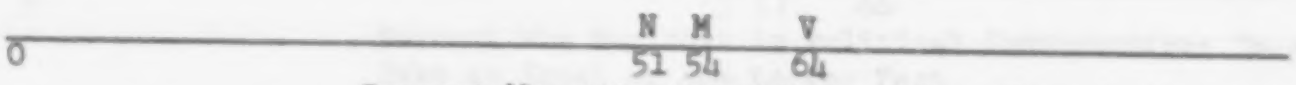


Percent Who Go to the Theatre

Percent Who Take Evening Courses

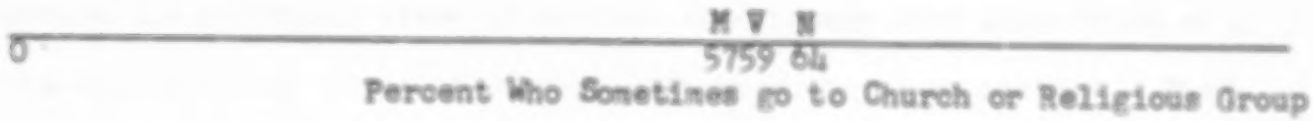
Percent Who Participate in Discussion Groups

Finally, there is participation in social or political group activities. And here, to our surprise, matched non-viewers again are not much more active than non-viewers in general.



Percent Who Attend Meetings of Some Organization

Percent Who Attend Fortnightly or More



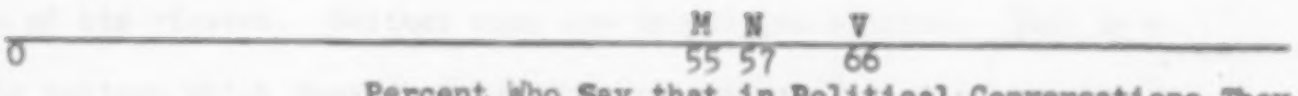
Percent Who Sometimes go to Church or Religious Group

Percent Who Have been Active in Politics

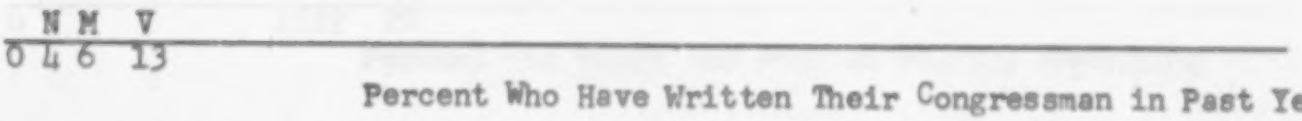
The difference between viewers and non-viewers in church attendance is small and contrary to the usual direction of difference. Non-viewers are more apt to be church goers. But it is entirely understandable in that non-viewers are largely Roman Catholic. What is surprising is that the matched non-viewers, who are also largely Catholics, attend church little.

They also engage in politics little. On a seven-point index of politization, viewers average a score of 1.3, non-viewers .7, and matched non-viewers .8 or almost the same low level as the non-viewers of ETV. This is confirmed by several detailed questions on political behavior. Non-viewers, whether the matched group or the representative one discuss politics little, do not take the lead in such discussions, have seldom written their Congressman or contributed to their political party.

Percent Who Say They Discuss Politics Frequently



Percent Who Say that in Political Conversations They Take an Equal or the Larger Part



Percent Who Have Written Their Congressman in Past Year

Percent Who Have Contributed to a Party in Past Four Years

Furthermore the political views of matched non-viewers were like those of other non-viewers, not like those of viewers with whom they were matched. They were not liberal. This may be seen in the four questions used before.

Percent Who Called Themselves Liberal

Percent Who Would Permit a Radio Speaker to Attack America

Percent Who Regard Personal Contact Between Peoples as Important in Solving World Problems

Percent Who Do not Regard Military Might as Important in Solving World Problems

The evidence builds up more and more that the gross social characteristics of the matched non-viewers are not important. The important thing about them is that they are non-viewers of WUHH. That one fact tells us that they are very different kinds of persons from those in the audience, and on the vital points more like non-viewers in general than like viewers. They are not good prospects for WUHH even though in one, but only one, relevant respect their TV habits are like those of its viewers. Neither ones are television addicts. That is a lower class pattern which does diminish when we control for social variables.

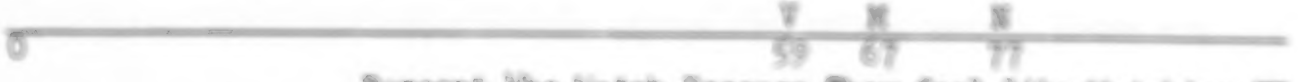
Percent Who Watch for Fear of Missing Something

Percent Who Watch to Put off Doing Something Else

Percent Who Get Stuck Because of Lead-in

On those questions which indicate compulsive watching of television, the matched cases respond like the viewers. And on less extreme questions indicating strong TV affinity they fall between viewers and non-viewers.

Percent Who Watch for Background



Percent Who Watch Because They feel like Watching TV

Percent Who Watch to Spend the Evening

In other respects--in their over-all evaluation of TV, in their choices of favorite programs, in their conversations about TV--the TV use habits of the matched non-viewers are like those of non-viewers of ETV, not like those of their matches.

Chapter V

Conclusion

WCBN reaches very nearly its full potential audience. The one-fifth of the population who watch it are persons of a special kind: alert, aspiring, intelligent. There are not many like them still outside the audience. It would be illusion to think that the same formula, the same kinds of programs which meet the needs of that one-fifth, can attract the rest of the public.

The reach of WCBN can, of course, still grow some. It is apparently slowly growing all the time anyhow. The one-fifth who are the regular audience shade off into another two-fifths who are marginal prospects. Most of these either see WCBN occasionally or have some other member of the family who does. There are some such marginal cases who are yet to be truly won. It becomes a matter of definition whether one calls consolidating such a marginal case as adding to the station's reach or to frequency of viewing. And our Decision experiment showed that experience with WCBN can hook people who would otherwise never use it. Furthermore the sector of the population from which WCBN drains is growing, thanks to the secular increase in education. But despite all these considerations the potential for increasing reach remains small. Reach is likely to grow but slowly for there are not among the non-viewers many prospective easy recruits.

But there is another way in which the audience of/for WCBN can grow, and grow greatly. That is to increase the frequency with which its own proper audience uses it. There is no reason why the 3/4-hour a week which it now commands from its viewers, cannot be doubled or trebled. The WCBN viewers are devoting many times that much time to CTV and being dissatisfied to boot. They have tastes and interests which ETV could satisfy. The problem is to finance and produce programs which will build bridges to these people via these tastes.

The thing most Boston ETV viewers want is not formal schooling on the air. Nor is it kinds of programs which commercial stations never provide. What WGBH viewers want is more of the intelligent urbane fare represented by Open End, the Boston Symphony, Louis Lyons, or Julius Caesar. They want better entertainment, better live news coverage, better commentary than they can get in the prime evening hours from stations which devote that time to the other four-fifths of the populace.

The notion that better entertainment is a proper function is one that some ETV stations do not accept. WGBH does; it seeks to provide some such intelligent artistic material. If someone does not provide such material, then that one-fifth of the public which makes up the audience for ETV will be badly served.

The people who make up the ETV audiences like foreign films, for example, but where can they now get them on TV. They are interested in world-wide live coverage of the dramatic news events of the day and would like to watch them in their normal leisure time in the evening. They also like sports, drama, comedy, and the whole of the popular culture, but they do not find it satisfying in the form in which it now appears on CTV. There is a function for a station which would set out to satisfy the full range of the viewing tastes of the top one-fifth of the population. WGBH has set out to be such a station. It is much more than an instructional medium. It seeks to fill a large and significant gap in the present structure of American communications and one that the responses to our survey demonstrate exists.

But always with ETV the question comes back to finances. The well-off active one-fifth of the population which watches ETV could afford a high quality network of channels which would give it what it wants. But how can their funds be tapped. Buying old foreign films, establishing live world-wide news coverage, putting on lively and intelligent variety-personality-commentary shows, like

Open End and the Today Show, capturing major cultural events like opera, all costs a great deal of money, much more than does an instructional series of lectures and panels. Yet in that kind of image of the future of TV lies its great opportunity to serve the largest of the now poorly served sectors of the American audience.

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